**SAVE THE EARTH: IT’S EVERYONE’S HOME!**

**LESSON 2: Grades 4-6**

# TO TRASH OR NOT TO TRASH?

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Comm. Arts: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6; Mathematics: 1, 3, 6; Science: 3, 4 and 8;

Social Studies: 6 & 7; Health: 6

**Objectives:** Students will learn the definition, purpose and benefits of re-using and recycling many different types of “trash”. Theywill learn how to identify items that can be reused and recycled and will develop and facilitate a program to do so in the classroom. Theywill conduct research to determine various people, groups and organizations in the community who would benefit from our re-used items and will keep accurate data on reusable items collected and distributed each month.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**W.5.7—Conduct short research projects to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.**

**SL.5.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.**

**SL.5.5—Use visual displays in presentations to support main ideas or themes.**

**Character Concepts: Responsibility, Citizenship**

**Responsibility:**  If each of us chooses to reduce, reuse and recycle, we can significantly reduce the negative impact that waste/trash has on our environment.  It is the responsibility of each of us to make daily choices that help to protect our environment for the sake of humans, the animals and future generations.

**Citizenship:**   We are demonstrating good citizenship when we research the needs of charitable organizations in our community and make an effort to gather the needed items to donate to the organizations.

We must all share in the well-being of our Earth within our school, our community and our homes.

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**3-5-ETS1.1—**Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want that includes a specified criteria for success and constraints on materials, time, or cost.

**ESS3.C—**Human Impacts on Earth Systems: Human activities in agriculture, industry and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth’s resources and environments. (E-ESS3-1)

**Materials:**

* Pillow case
* Various types of trash to put into the pillow case (pickle jar, old phone book, soda can, milk jug, newspaper, book, old stuffed animal, battery, plastic water bottle, outgrown article of clothing, toy, candy wrapper, milk carton, other “trash”)
* Three large plastic bins labeled (trash, reuse, recycle) and include the recycle symbol on the recycle label
* Current phone book (for research)

**Method:**

1. Write the following three words on the chalkboard (trash, reuse, recycle) and divide the class into three groups, assigning one of these words to each group for them to create a definition. Give them approximately three minutes to discuss it and then have the groups report their ideas and discuss their thinking with the class. Write the agreed upon definitions next to each term on the board.
2. Play the “To Trash or not to Trash” Game. Pull items out of the pillow case one by one while each group decides together which bin the item should go in, basing their answers on the definitions on the board. Discuss each group’s findings noting that they may have come to different conclusions (not necessarily right or wrong). For example, one group may say the milk carton is recyclable while another group says it can be reused as a bird feeder. This is ok. The idea is to have very few items in the “trash” bin. Show the class how full the reuse and recycle bins are and point out that there really isn’t much “trash” left to go into the local landfill. More landfills are needed to “bury” all the trash we produce. Fertile land is used to hold these landfills and waste from these landfills contaminate the soil and the ground water supply, affecting animals, the environment and people. Think how big of a difference could be made if everyone in the community or world reused and recycled!
3. Remind them that a lot of “trash” was picked up yesterday off the school grounds. Ask them to recall as many items as possible, writing the names of the items beneath the corresponding titles. How much was really leftover “trash”?

**Call to Action:** Explain that you will be keeping the bins in the classroom so the class can maintain and regulate a recycling/repurposing program. Create a simple plan with your class that everyone agrees on. The more ownership they have, the more likely they will be dedicated to it! Have them break into teams to brainstorm and research organizations, groups or individuals that could benefit from the most predominant reusable items on your list. For example, animal shelters are always in need of the following things that people can find in their homes that they may not need or want anymore:

* + cardboard soda flats= litter boxes
  + newspaper=line cages
  + shredded paper=for cages
  + gently used dog, cat, rabbit, hamster toys and tennis balls=exercise
  + blankets, sheets, towels, etc.= to comfort animals and for surgery
  + gently loved stuffed animals= comfort, puppies and kittens can snuggle with them

They could research and contact local shelters online who would LOVE to have these items. You could then make this your charity project for the year and collect only these reusable items all year long from other classes, teachers, the community, etc. Advertise your project in the school newspaper, flyers, on the announcements, make posters, at school sporting events, etc. The possibilities are endless! Record your collections and donations and celebrate your efforts!

\*\*\*\*\*You could take the recycling in yourself regularly or have students write persuasive, informative letters to their parents asking them to help your cause by picking a week during the school year to offer to take the recycling to a designated company. If your school already has a recycling service, great!

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web sites:**

[www.kidsplanet.org](http://www.kidsplanet.org)

[www.environmentalconcerns.org](http://www.environmentalconcerns.org)

[www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm)

[www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)

[www.kidsface.org](http://www.kidsface.org)

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

[www.ikecoalition.org](http://www.ikecoalition.org)

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/)

Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for animal-related web site